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bly, and of the press; full exemption of conscientious objectors; heavy taxes on war profits, and the conscription of wealth. The League contemplates the publication of a weekly news bulletin to all who may apply for it at the editorial office, 120 Boylston street, Boston.

JOINING THE ISSUE

BALTIMORE, October 24, 1917.

SIR: The author of the article in the October issue of the *ADVOCATE OF PEACE* entitled "The Dilemma of the Religious Objector" entirely misapprehends the situation. The "logical dilemma" is within his own brain. To the man who regards God as supreme, and all men as accountable to Him, there is no logical dilemma when mere human authority orders him to disobey God. His position is like that of a citizen of Virginia when he finds that a law of the State conflicts with a law of Congress. He appeals to the Supreme Court, and yet is not disloyal to his own State. When Peter and John were commanded by their ruler not to speak in the name of Jesus, they answered, We ought to obey God rather than men. From that day to this, conscientious objectors have from time to time stood fearlessly before the authorities, ready to suffer imprisonment or death rather than disobey God. Yet our critic says that "the very notion that the purposes of the United States Government can run counter to the purposes of God is ridiculous." Does he believe in the infallibility of our Government? Is that not practically the same thing as the medieval doctrine that "the king can do no wrong?" That is the Kaiser's position today—"Me and God." We grant that the purposes of the U. S. Government are good. But does it follow that its acts are all wise and fair to all kinds and conditions of its citizens? Is it not liable to mistakes, and to be unjust to some? Can we be sure that all of its acts have the Divine approval?

Our critic argues that the duty to bear arms in support of government follows from Christ's injunction to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." He fails to note that Christ was speaking to the question whether it was right to pay *tribute* to Cæsar—a very different matter from bearing arms to take life. For the first two hundred years after Christ the Christians generally considered it wrong to bear arms, the usual answer being that of the Roman soldier who, when he was converted, said, "I am a Christian, and therefore I cannot fight," and was executed rather than bear arms. Tertullian wrote: "In disarming Peter, Christ unbelted every soldier. . . . He proclaims that he that uses the sword shall perish with the sword. . . . Shall a son of peace take part in battle?" Such was the view of the early Christians.

But, again, our critic claims that Christ's command to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's implies that the commands of government are to be obeyed as far as they relate to outward conduct and not to spiritual matters. If this is correct as to one government, why not to other governments? And it would follow that our Revolutionary fathers should have obeyed their sovereign, and, in fact, that all the heroes of liberty were disobeying God in refusing obedience to their rulers. If, on the other hand, they were justified under the circumstances, where is the line to be drawn between right compliance with authority and right

refusal to obey? Must not the matter be settled for each man by an appeal to his own supreme court, the law of God as he understands it, the law written in his heart and conscience? There is no more loyal citizen than the genuine religious objector, for, besides the sentiment of patriotism, he feels under religious obligation to obey the Government as far as he can. If he is ordered to do something in violation of his conscience, he will simply decline and suffer the penalty without resistance; so that he cannot rightly be called disloyal, for he desires to serve in some way other than military.

I suggest that our critic study the underlying principles of the Reformation and their logical development by Fox and Penn: the principle that the individual conscience must be free; that human law cannot make that thing right which by divine law is wrong; that religion cannot be divorced from conduct; that a man can only be known by his fruits, the Christian by manifesting the spirit of Christ, who went about doing good, showing forgiveness to his enemies and love to all men. Can war be carried on in this spirit? If not, we cannot, as loyal to Christ, be parties to war; at the same time, as loyal to our country, we submit to the penalties imposed by it, and pay our share of the taxes and take more than our share of the burden of relieving war sufferers. We believe that God can overthrow tyrants and bring about peace without calling on those who desire to live in the spirit of Christ to violate the law of love toward all men, even their enemies, and that he is the best citizen of earth whose citizenship is in heaven.

JOHN C. THOMAS.

[The writer of the article in question wishes to apologize if his phrase, "That the purposes of the United States Government can run counter to the purposes of God is ridiculous," is as ambiguous as the above writer makes it seem. His meaning was and is, "A temporal power cannot frustrate the will of God," since the will of God is the spiritual infinite. The writer would beg this reader and other readers to believe that his article was not written as a flippant defense of the Government, but as a sincere attestation of his faith in the power and permanence of divine wisdom and love. This faith is based upon the same foundation as that of the Psalmist who sang: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." If the reader does not believe that perfect confidence in God is powerful, even in the "shadow," or imminence, of death (to others as to oneself), to avert all evil (either from or against oneself), then, of course, he will find no meaning either in the article in question or in this endeavor to restate its meaning. If this is not accepted as a fundamental fact, from which all other facts may be orientated and by which their truth may be tested, then no amount of exegetical argument will prove anything, either for the writer or the reader.]

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"I am reading with a good deal of interest what is said in the *ADVOCATE* as to the attitude of the American Peace Societies; this, in a general way, helps me in my work here.—F. Maddison, Secretary International Arbitration League, founded by William Randal Cremer, 39 Victoria street, London, S. W. 1.